

Transportation Projects at Risk

Following is a list of critical Washington State projects that will be stalled without an increase in funding. This list highlights some of the most visible projects of the hundreds that would be built over the next ten years. Without them, the transportation system that you use to drive to work, or haul your goods to market, or travel as a tourist, will be compromised.

Projects to improve Interstate 5 (I-5)

■ **Widening 2 miles of I-5 north of Vancouver**

This stretch of interstate north of Vancouver, from Salmon Creek to 134th Avenue, is the last remaining section of I-5 to be widened in Clark County, the fastest growing area of the fastest growing county in the state. It connects the downtown core with the area north of the city near the fairgrounds and the Washington State University Vancouver campus. The project calls for widening I-5 from four lanes to six lanes plus a lane for exiting and entering between interchanges.

Why do this project? The project is needed to reduce backups, improve safety, and lessen air quality impacts.

Scheduled construction start: Summer 2002

What's at stake? The current budget funds the remaining design work. There is no funding for construction.

■ **Widening I-5 near Chehalis and Centralia**

This project widens I-5 to six lanes through the Chehalis and Centralia area, adding one lane in each direction.

Why do this project? Widening the few remaining four-lane sections of I-5 is critically needed. These sections of I-5 have not been added to since 1956, and since 1990, traffic has increased by about 80 percent, including large increases in the number of large trucks using these freeway stretches. The project is needed to reduce back-ups, improve safety, and lessen air quality impacts.

Scheduled construction start: March 2004

What's at stake? The current budget pays for only about 15 percent of the remaining design work for the first construction phase and the early design work for the next phase.

- **Improving interchanges and the HOV lanes in Tacoma**

This project calls for widening I-5 to include HOV lanes and to connect those lanes to HOV lanes on State Route 16, headed to Gig Harbor. The work would include building a new “Nalley Valley” viaduct to accommodate HOV lanes, rebuilding ramps and interchanges on I-5 at State Route 16 and at 38th Street in Tacoma. A second project would widen I-5 in Tacoma from Thompson Avenue to the Puyallup River and make improvements to interchanges.

Why do these projects? Completing the HOV lanes through Tacoma allows everyone to get to work and to home faster. The HOV lanes will save a typical driver in the afternoon rush hour commute 27 percent of travel time.

Scheduled construction starts: October 2002

What’s at stake? The current budget does not include funding for construction.

- **Adding HOV lanes and fixing interchanges in south King County**

This project widens I-5 for HOV lanes between Tukwila and the Pierce County line. Improving the pavement and interchanges also will be included.

Why do this project? Completion of the southbound HOV lanes to the Pierce County line will save the typical driver in the afternoon rush hour 5 percent in travel time.

Scheduled construction start: October 2002

What’s at stake? Two of the four construction phases are underway but there is no funding for the remaining two construction phases.

- **Adding HOV lanes and improving interchanges in Snohomish County**

This project constructs HOV lanes on I-5 from Everett (State Route 2) south to the Boeing Freeway (State Route 526) and makes improvements to interchanges.

Why do this project? The HOV lane improvements on I-5 are required to complete the main HOV lane system. These HOV lanes through Everett in Snohomish County will save the typical driver in the afternoon rush hour commute 21 percent in travel time.

Scheduled construction start: March 2004

What’s at stake? The current budget includes less than 50 percent of the amount needed to complete the design.

- **Rebuilding an interchange on I-5 in Snohomish County**

This project finishes rebuilding the interchange at 196th Street Southwest in Lynnwood.

Why do this project? The project will reduce congestion and improve safety.

Scheduled construction start: March 2003

What's at stake? The current budget provides for completion of design but there is no funding for right-of-way acquisition or construction.

- **Fixing the pavement from south Seattle to Snohomish County line**
This project fixes deteriorated concrete pavement on I-5 from south Seattle to the Snohomish County line.

Why do this project? This project will improve safety and protect the structure of the roadway.

What's at stake? No funding has been provided for this project.

Why add HOV lanes?

HOV lanes move more people and freight in less time. On Interstate 405 near Bellevue, and I-5 near Shoreline, the HOV lanes carry almost as many people as the adjacent general purpose lanes. A recent report by the Washington State Transportation Center indicates that Puget Sound HOV lanes move people 25 to 50 percent faster than the general traffic lanes.

The Puget Sound HOV system is about two-thirds complete, with more than 190 miles of HOV lanes open for use, and just over 100 miles needed.

Projects to improve Interstate 90 (I-90)

■ **Widening I-90 east of Snoqualmie Pass**

This project will widen 12 miles of I-90 to six lanes.

Why do this project? This project will reduce congestion, improve safety, limit the closures due to avalanches, and help trucks move freight faster.

What's at stake? The current budget funds the continuation of design work. Additional funding would accelerate the design work and allow construction to begin sooner.

■ **Building a truck lane near Cle Elum**

This project would build a truck climbing lane from Highline Canal to Elk Heights.

Why do this project? This project would improve traffic flow and safety, and help trucks move freight faster.

Scheduled construction start: 2002

What's at stake? There is no funding for construction.

■ **Adding a truck lane from Vantage to Ryegrass Summit**

This project would add a truck climbing lane westbound out of Vantage.

Why do this project? The project would improve traffic flow and safety, and help trucks move freight faster.

Scheduled construction start: August

What's at stake? There is no funding for construction.

■ **Widening I-90 from Spokane to Idaho**

This project will add two additional lanes (one general purpose lane in each direction) to I-90 from the Argonne Road interchange to the Idaho border. The intent is to build this project in three major phases: Argonne Road to Sullivan Road, Sullivan Road to Harvard Road (Liberty Lake), and Harvard Road to the Idaho border. I-90 is recognized as an important corridor for trucks because of the international and domestic interstate and intrastate trade that it accommodates. In addition, it is a major commute route for eastern Spokane County and Idaho. I-90 regularly experiences daily traffic volumes exceeding 100,000 vehicles per day.

Why do this project? This project improves safety and the ability of trucks to move freight faster and reduces congestion. Studies indicate that freight traffic through this corridor will increase by 30 percent over the next 10 years. Absent the capability of the corridor to efficiently accommodate these freight movements along with the growing

passenger vehicle traffic, there could be a negative impact to the overall economics of the entire region.

What's at stake? The current budget allows for completing the design and purchasing the right of way by fall 2002. Additional funding would pay for the first phase of construction (when combined with \$14 million from the Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board) and to continue the design and right of way purchase for later phases.

Projects to improve Interstate 405 (I-405)

■ **Improving the I-405 Corridor**

The I-405 Corridor Program is a community-based partnership to create an integrated package of roadway expansion and transit and management improvements that will address future travel needs. Major components being considered are:

- Adding two to four lanes for general traffic.
- Adding light rail, monorail, or another type of high capacity transit system.
- Expanding city and county roads that connect to I-405.
- Adding express lanes.
- Starting a program to reduce the number of car trips people make.
- Expanding park and ride lots.

Why do this project? These projects would relieve congestion and improve safety from Tukwila to Lynnwood. They also would improve the movement of people and goods with a mix of added highway capacity, increased transit, and demand management activities. If the preliminary preferred alternative is built, the program will:

- Reduce the amount of time spent in traffic by more than 13 million hours a year.
- Reduce regional emission of carbon monoxide by 6,720 metric tons a year.
- Reduce congestion by 20 percent and accommodate an additional 110,000 person trips per day in the corridor.
- Result in a total yearly travel time savings valued at \$569 million and accident savings of \$42 million.

Anticipated construction start: 2003

What's at stake? The current budget funds a portion of the planning and pre-design work. Additional funding would speed up the planning and design phases.

■ **Rebuilding the interchange at Northeast 44th Street in Renton**

This project rebuilds the interchange at Northeast 44th Street in Renton near Port Quendall.

Why do this project? The project would allow the city to clean up contaminated property and redeveloped it using a small amount of state funds to leverage local funding.

Scheduled construction start: 2003

What's at stake? The current budget, along with \$5 million from Renton and the developer, will complete the design work. Construction is not funded.

Washington State Ferry Projects

■ **Seattle – Kingston Ferry**

This new passenger-only ferry run would provide service directly between Seattle and Kingston. This new run would serve residents of north Kitsap and operate during commute times when the nearby ferries are running near capacity. The new ferry run would also reduce the number of cars on Interstate 5 traveling between Edmonds and Seattle. No terminal work would be needed in Seattle since Pier 52 can already accommodate passenger-only ferries.

Why do this project? This project reduces demand for the auto ferries from the Seattle-Bainbridge Island and Edmonds-Kingston ferry runs that are nearing capacity during commute times. This project also reduces the number of automobiles on I-5 between Edmonds and Seattle.

Scheduled start: none

What's at stake? There is no funding for vessels or for a passenger-only terminal at Kingston.

■ **Four New Ferries**

Four new vessels are needed to replace existing vessels, built in 1929, that have been refurbished twice already, and have reached the end of their functional life.

Why do this project? The new boats have greater maneuverability and additional capacity including the ability to move freight. The existing vessels are nearing the end of their useful life.

Scheduled start: none

What's at stake? There is no funding for the new vessels.

■ **Building a new ferry terminal in Mukilteo**

This project moves and expands the Mukilteo Ferry terminal. The new terminal would have two-slips (the second slip permits the addition of a third vessel on the route) and transfer facilities for ferry connections with regional rail and bus carriers. It also would include passenger facilities, more parking, and an overhead loading structure that improves the efficiency of loading and unloading. Nearby highway improvements also would be made.

Why do this project? The increased parking would relieve congestion on local streets near the terminal and improve highway access.

Other major projects for Whatcom County

■ **Improving State Route 9 to the Canadian border**

This project improves State Route 9 from Nooksack (State Route 546) to Sumas (State Route 547) to an all-weather road.

Why do this project? The project would eliminate cold weather load limits for trucks and help them move faster and more safely through the area.

Scheduled construction start: Fall 2002

What's at stake? The current budget funds design but there is not funding for construction. The Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board will help fund the project with \$5.3 million.

■ **Widening State Route 543 to the Canadian border**

This project widens State Route 543 with a separate route for truck traffic crossing the international border.

Why do this project? This project will help trucks move freight faster and will improve safety.

Scheduled construction start: 2002

What's at stake? The current budget pays for the design and purchase of right-of-way. Additional money is needed for construction. Additional committed federal funds, along with partner's Freight Mobility Strategic Investment Board funds, would fund the project fully.

■ **Widening State Route 539 to the Canadian border**

This project would widen State Route 539 to four lanes from Laurel (north of Bellingham) to the Canadian border.

Why do this project? This project will help trucks move freight faster and will improve safety.

What's at stake? The current budget will continue the planning and design work. Additional funding would speed up the design work and purchase of right-of-way.

Other major projects for Snohomish County

- **Building a Monroe bypass**

This project would build a bypass for US 2 traffic to bypass the city of Monroe.

Why do this project? This project would reduce congestion and improve safety.

What's at stake? The current budget covers continued planning. Additional funds are needed to finish planning and for construction.

- **Building new interchanges on State Route 522**

There are two projects to build new interchanges on State Route 522. The first would replace an intersection at Paradise Lake Road and the second would replace an intersection at Fales/Echo Lake Road.

Why do these projects? Both projects would reduce accidents and congestion.

Scheduled construction start: 2002

What's at stake? These projects should be funded at the same time that the road is being widened, saving about \$1 million. The current budget pays to complete design and right-of-way purchase for both projects and part of the widening but not construction of the new interchanges.

Other major projects for Pierce County

- **Improving I-5 leading to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge**

This project would build a new bridge adjacent to the existing Tacoma Narrows Bridge with additional lanes and make interchange and safety improvements. Preservation work also would be done on the existing bridge.

Why do this project? The project would reduce congestion and accidents.

What's at stake? The current budget will pay for right-of-way purchase. Construction is not funded.

- **Widening State Route 161 between Milton and I-5**

This project would widen State Route 161 to five lanes between from 36th Street to 360th Street.

Why do this project? The project will reduce congestion and accidents.

What's at stake? Additional funding would pay for construction of the northern portion and continuation of design work and right-of-way purchase on the southern portion.

- **Building a new freeway between Fife and Puyallup**

- This project adds 6 miles to State Route 167, extending it from State Route 509 in Tacoma through Fife to State Route 161 in Puyallup. The new freeway will have HOV lanes and will run on the north side of the Puyallup River in Pierce County.

Why do this project? The project will improve regional mobility of both people and goods, improve safety, reduce congestion, and maintain or improve air quality.

What's at stake? The current budget will continue planning and design work. Additional funding would begin right-of-way purchase.

Other major King County projects

■ **Repairing the Alaskan Way Viaduct**

The combination of aging and seismic vulnerability means that the Alaskan Way Viaduct along Seattle's waterfront needs to be retrofitted or replaced within the next ten years. Options under consideration include replacing it with a similar structure, with a boulevard, a tunnel, or some combination of these options.

Why do this project? Fixing this aging and seismically outmoded structure helps maintain a vital transportation link for 100,000 vehicles per day and provides an important freight link between south Seattle, Interbay, Ballard, and Magnolia.

Scheduled construction start: A contract to design and build the project would be awarded between 2003-2005.

What's at stake? Without additional funding, construction will be delayed.

■ **Replacing the Evergreen Point Floating Bridge in Seattle**

The State Route 520 Evergreen Point Floating Bridge needs to be replaced within the next 20 years. The study will determine if it should be replaced as is, but up to current standards, or if additional capacity for cars, vanpools, and transit should be added. All options include a path for bike and pedestrian use.

Why do this project? The completion of HOV facilities for the length of the corridor would allow 9,000 more vehicles and 53,000 more people to cross the lake daily by 2020. Completing the HOV lanes and adding two lanes for general traffic would allow 64,000 more vehicles and 116,000 more people to cross the lake daily by 2020. High capacity transit, whether in the I-90 or State Route 520 corridor would increase cross lake transit trips from about 20,000 daily to about 27,000 daily by 2020. Aggressive Travel Demand Management strategies in the corridor could reduce cross-lake demand by as much as 6 percent.

What's at stake? Without additional funding, all work on the Translake Study will stop within a few months.

■ **Finishing a highway (State Route 509)**

I-5 between Seattle and Tacoma is the most congested in Washington. Completing State Route 509 will divert traffic from I-5, provide a southern access to the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport, and move freight off I-5 traveling to and from the ports of Tacoma and Seattle and the many freight distribution centers in the area.

Why do this project? The project improves the ability to move freight in south King County. This is the heaviest traveled freight corridor in the Pacific Northwest and is important to the state's economic growth. The improved freeway will allow more than 9,000 trucks to use State Route 509 daily, improving truck schedule reliability, reducing travel distances, and reducing truck travel times. This time savings is valued at \$62 million

per year for trucks. In addition, the freeway provides a south access link between I-5 and the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. It also improves traffic flow on I-5 from South 320th Street to Seattle by diverting traffic from the heavily congested Southcenter Hill and by adding lane capacity on I-5 as far south as South 320th in Federal Way. In addition, it provides for future buses and carpools between south Seattle and south King County.

What's at stake? With new funds, utility and environmental mitigation work and construction can start.

Other major Eastern Washington projects

■ **Dividing a highway to prevent deaths near Pullman**

This project will construct a four-lane, divided highway between Pullman and Moscow on State Route 270 between Johnson Road (Bishop Boulevard) to the Idaho border. This is an important commute route between two university communities, Washington State University in Pullman, Washington and Moscow, Idaho. Along with cars, this route also carries a large number of heavy trucks moving commodities to market. Community concerns about the safety of this roadway are increasingly apparent.

Why do this project? Although the current configuration of State Route 270, a two-lane rural highway, is built to the latest standards, the high traffic volume of more than 15,000 vehicles per day lends itself to collision problems. Head-on collisions resulting in fatalities happen far too often. This project would substantially reduce collisions by creating the divided highway and median. There were 146 injury accidents, with seven of those involving fatalities, between January 1990 and December 2000. Collisions involving vehicles entering the roadway also would be reduced as the number of access points would be limited.

Scheduled construction start: 2003

What's at stake? Without additional funding, construction could not begin.

■ **Building a North Spokane Corridor**

This project will provide a 60 mph, limited access highway with a direct connection to I-90 just west of the Thor/Freya interchange. Other interchanges will be placed at locations along the corridor such as Trent Avenue (State Route 290), Wellesley Avenue, Francis / Freya Street, Parksmith Drive, US 2, and US 395 at Wandermere.

Why do this project? Historically, arterials such as Division Street have had accident rates of up to 3.5 times that of a facility similar to the proposed North Spokane Corridor. As traffic continues to increase in neighborhoods and school zones, there is an increasing potential for accidents involving pedestrians and bicyclists. Upon the completion of this corridor project, it has been estimated there will be a reduction of more than 700 accidents a year. This reduction translates into a societal cost savings of more than \$22 million a year. In addition, the North Spokane Corridor will allow people and freight to flow freely through the Spokane Metropolitan area rather than be slowed by congestion that is increasingly experienced on the existing surface street routes.

Scheduled construction start: August

What's at stake? Without additional funding, the project would be stopped after the first section.

■ **State Route 240 Corridor Improvements in the Tri Cities**

This portion of State Route 240 connects Richland to Kennewick and provides a connection to Interstate 182 leading to the U.S. Department of Energy's Hanford site, and two industrial zones. This project is vital to area commerce. Plans to clean up the Hanford Nuclear Reservation will be adding 4,000 to 6,000 commuters to the 54,000 the roadway currently carries each day.

Why do this project? This project helps local commerce, meets the expanding needs of commuters and provides a pedestrian and bicycle corridor to encourage alternative modes of transportation.

Scheduled start: none

What's at stake? There is no state funding for the rest of the project which is needed to secure federal funding for the bridge over the Yakima River.